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ABSTRACT

The Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) is the only agency that accredits college and university advertising programs. Its accrediting committee consists of 10 educators and seven professionals who base the accrediting process largely on how well an advertising unit or sequence meets the objectives and philosophies it has established for itself. A journalism unit or sequence initiates the accreditation process by requesting evaluation by the accrediting council. It then prepares a previsit report in which it assesses its objectives, strengths, and weaknesses. A visiting team appointed by the accrediting committee then visits the campus for about two days, observing classes and interviewing administrators, faculty, and students. Before leaving the campus, the team prepares its report and presents it to the unit head and the college's highest academic officer, but its recommendation is not revealed at this time. The accrediting committee considers all reports at its annual meeting. The advertising programs are evaluated primarily in terms of their own objectives and philosophies, but the committee has established some basic standards of administration, teaching, facilities, and goals. The Association for Education in Journalism could seek some changes in the current accreditation process, but in any case it must continue to examine and define its own position on accreditation. (JL)

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A PERSPECTIVE ON ADVERTISING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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A PERSPECTIVE ON ADVERTISING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The issue of accreditation standards for advertising programs has become an increasingly relevant and pertinent concern in recent years. Informal discussion of accreditation at the 1981 AEJ convention stimulated a call for a formal Advertising Division session at this convention and the establishment of a division committee to study the question and to consider the formulation of standards. The American Academy of Advertising has also discussed the accrediting question.

The concern has been heightened by the great increase in the number of advertising students and advertising programs at U.S. colleges. In his annual report on journalism enrollments, Paul Peterson reported that there were almost 10,000 students in advertising sequences in 1980. Peterson's totals for 1981 were approximately 8,600 but they did not include Michigan State, one of the largest advertising programs in the country. (1) By contrast, his reports showed 3,200 advertising students in 1970 and 5,700 in 1975. Journalism Educator's annual directory listed 89 schools or departments with advertising sequences in 1981, and 30 of those sequences are accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communication. (2) In 1975, 24 sequences were accredited.

Donald Vance reported in 1980 that advertising programs in journalism or communications departments outnumber programs in business schools by nearly five to one. (3) In a later paper, Vance reported that advertising

practitioners have had no involvement in the advertising accreditation process and that advertising educators have not had much of a voice in accreditation decisions. Vance recommended a four-part program to increase involvement in the accreditation process:

1. Establish and fund a Commission on Advertising Education that includes educators and practitioners.
2. Ask the Commission to make recommendations of "ideal advertising educational patterns" in journalism and business programs.
3. Seek ACEJMC membership for the American Academy of Advertising.
4. Seek membership for the American Academy of Advertising, the Association of National Advertisers, the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the National Retail Merchants Association on ACEJMC and the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. (4)

This paper explains the organizations involved in the accreditation process for journalism and mass communication, describes the accreditation process, discusses the standards used to evaluate programs and proposes some approaches to the question of standards for advertising accreditation.

ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

The Accrediting Council

The only agency that accredits advertising programs in journalism and communications units is the Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). ACEJMC is formally recognized for this purpose by the United States Office of Education and the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPA).

The Council has 33 members: 19 professional representatives, 11 journalism educator representatives and 3 public representatives. The 19 professionals represent organizations that join the Council by application and approval of other Council members. Organizations currently represented are:

American Newspaper Publishers Association
American Society of Magazine Editors
American Society of Newspaper Editors
Associated Press Broadcasters Association
Associated Press Managing Editors Association
Broadcast Education Association
Inland Daily Press Association
International Association of Business Communicators
International Newspaper Advertising and Marketing Executives
National Association of Broadcasters
National Conference of Editorial Writers
National Newspaper Association
National Press Photographers Association
Public Relations Society of America
Radio Television News Directors Association
Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi
Southern Newspaper Publishers Association
Western Newspaper Foundation
Women in Communication, Inc.

Educators on the Council are from three associations:

Association for Education in Journalism
- Sharon Murphy, Southern Illinois
- Donald Brod, Northern Illinois
- Paul Peterson, Ohio State
- Kenneth Starck, Iowa

American Society of Journalism School Administrators
- Robert Blanchard, Penn State
- David Haberman, Creighton
- Billy Ross, Texas Tech

American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism
- Ken Atkin, California State at Fullerton
- Dwight Teeter, Texas
- Richard Gray, Indiana

A former educator, Milt Gross of Missouri, is secretary-treasurer of the Council.

Current public members are Marilyn Ainsworth, a law professor from the Universtiy of Kansas; Carl Sapp, an attorney in Columbia, Mo.; and Harry Hill, a physician from Atlanta.

Each Council member currently has one vote, which means that educators are outnumbered by professionals. That situation led to a resolution at the 1981 AEJ convention calling for equal representation for educators. The question is currently being discussed by the Council.

Three educators on the Council have advertising backgrounds: Gross, Atkin and Ross. However, no sequence or specialty is formally represented by educators on the Council; they are chosen by virtue of their offices or positions in their constituent organizations. Only one advertising association (International Newspaper Advertising and Marketing Executives) is on the Council. One thing the AEJ Advertising Division can do is to urge Council participation by other professional associations, such as the American Advertising Federation and the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

The Accrediting Committee

The Accrediting Council elects the Accrediting Committee, which currently includes ten educators and seven professionals.

Educators

Doug Newsom, Texas Christian (Accrediting Committee Chairman)
Emery Sasser, South Florida (Accrediting Committee Vice-chairman)
Baskett Mosse, Northwestern (Accrediting Committee Executive Secretary)
Tom Bowers, North Carolina
Del Brinkman, Kansas
Jim Carey, Illinois
Neale Copple, Nebraska
Dan Drew, Wisconsin-Madison
Karen Ohrn, Iowa
Richard Tobin, Indiana

Professionals

Don Carter, Knight-Ridder (ex officio, Council president)
William Day, The Toledo Blade
Virginia Dodge Fielder, Knight-Ridder
Albert Fitzpatrick, Akron Beacon Journal
Paul Janensch, Louisville Courier-Journal
Harold Niven, National Association of Broadcasters
Cruise Palmer, former editor of Kansas City Star

The Council has no formal guidelines for selection of persons to serve on the Committee. As in the case with the Council, sequences or special interests are not formally represented. However, some effort is made to have a variety of interests represented by at least the educator members of the Committee. At the present time, Bowers is the only educator who regularly teaches advertising courses.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

A journalism unit (school or department) initiates the accreditation process by requesting evaluation by the Accrediting Council and the Accrediting Committee. The request specifies the sequences that are to be evaluated. The unit completes an extensive pre-visit report according to an outline provided by the Committee. An important part of the pre-visit preparation and report is an extensive self-study, in which the unit and sequences assess their objectives, strengths and weaknesses.

The Committee chairman and executive secretary nominate a visit team that will conduct an on-campus evaluation of the unit and sequences. Visit teams are normally chaired by a member of the Accrediting Committee, and that person is primarily responsible for evaluation of the overall unit. In addition, visit teams include at least one person for each sequence to be evaluated. These can be Committee members, Council members, or outside educators and professionals. The head of the unit being evaluated

may request a change in the visit team because of perceived conflict of interest. Copies of the pre-visit report are sent to members of the visit team in advance of the visit to give them ample opportunity to study the information.

The on-campus visit takes two days for most units and three days or more for very large and complex units. While on campus, team members observe classes, interview administrators and faculty and talk to students. Before leaving campus, the team prepares a visitors' report that is presented to the unit head and the college's highest academic officer. Although the team reaches a recommendation about accreditation at the end of the visit, that recommendation is not revealed to the unit or college administrator.

Visit reports--including recommendations--are forwarded to the Accrediting Committee, which meets in March to consider all reports made during the school year. The Committee makes its own recommendations about each unit--confirming or reversing recommendations by visit teams--and forwards those recommendations to the Accrediting Council. The Council meets in April to review the Committee recommendations and to make final decisions about accreditation for each unit evaluated during that academic year.

Individual sequences cannot be accredited unless the unit is accredited. In turn, a unit cannot be accredited unless more than 50 percent of its students are registered in accreditable sequences. When the Council feels that a sequence being considered for re-accreditation does not meet ACEJMC standards, the sequence can be placed on probationary status for one year if the Council believes the deficiences can be corrected rapidly. Likewise, provisional status can be granted to new sequences being considered for initial accreditation. In both cases, sequences are re-evaluated a year later.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Units and sequences are evaluated primarily in terms of how well they meet the objectives and philosophies they have established for themselves. These are spelled out in the pre-visit report, and the visit teams are concerned primarily with whether units and sequences do what they say they try to do. Despite this emphasis, the Accrediting Council has established some minimal standards for accreditation, and those are briefly summarized here.

a. Units are expected to be committed to the principle of expanding opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

b. Students are expected to take three-fourths of all college courses outside of journalism and mass communications.

c. Laboratory classes should have a ratio of 15 students to 1 instructor.

d. While required professional courses can vary according to the objectives of individual programs, all students should have instruction in factual writing, editing, communication law, ethics, theory, history and responsibilities of journalism and mass communications.

e. Students should take most of their professional courses in their junior and senior years.

f. Faculty members should have appropriate academic and professional credentials. A supervisor must be appointed for each sequence being considered for accreditation.

g. Units and sequences should have adequate physical facilities, equipment and library resources to accomplish their objectives.

h. Units should have at least five graduates a year. Sequences should have at least five graduates in each of three years preceding the visit. The professional accomplishments of graduates is one of the factors considered in the accreditation process.

i. Faculty members in the units and sequences are expected to maintain working relationships with media and other professional organizations.

j. No more than 10 percent of a student's journalism and mass communications credit should be earned through internships, and internships for credit should be closely supervised by faculty members.

The report that the visit team prepares follows a prescribed format, and the section on the unit's evaluation includes the following headings:

A. Administrative Relationships and Duties

1. University administrative support of journalism unit, journalism faculty relationships with journalism administration, administrative and faculty relationships with media, administrative encouragement of faculty research.

2. Faculty salaries, teaching loads, promotion policies, diversity, faculty participation in educational policy making.

3. Keeping of student records, placement of journalism graduates, journalism alumni relations, student recruitment activities and diversity, personal student advising by faculty and administration.

B. Budget and Facilities

1. Journalism quarters, budget, availability and effective use of faculty travel funds, student scholarship funds.

2. Availability of journalism books, newspapers, periodicals and magazines.

C. Faculty, Scholarly and Academic Standards

1. Administrative adherence to stated degree requirements, journalism student admission standards, academic achievement (grades) of journalism students, student use of library facilities.

2. Faculty morale, professional experience of faculty, academic and professional achievement of faculty, research productivity, faculty participation in professional activities (consulting, summer refresher jobs, association work, etc.).

3. Quality and supervision of parttime faculty, ratio of parttime teachers to fulltime, percent of total teaching budget paid to parttime teachers, accessibility of parttime teachers to students and participation in educational affairs of the unit. How parttime teachers are evaluated.

4. Sequences being offered but not considered for accreditation, percent of total unit enrollment in sequences not considered for accreditation (Count juniors, seniors and graduate students only).

5. Ratio of journalism to liberal arts courses, breadth and depth of liberal arts requirements, emphasis on history and communications study and understanding.

D. Students and Graduates

1. Student morale and respect for journalism unit, student-faculty relations, professional achievement of journalism graduates.

Advertising Sequence Standards

The Accrediting Council has generally avoided the establishment of specific standards for sequences, again preferring that sequences be evaluated in terms of their own standards and objectives. This philosophy can encourage innovation and does not give larger units and sequences advantages over smaller ones. Nevertheless, in 1979 the Council did issue a set of guidelines for various sequences, calling them "minimum requirements that the unit and program are expected to enhance, to improve the students' educational opportunities." Six minimal guidelines were listed for advertising sequences:

1. A qualified faculty with appropriate professional advertising experience.
2. A core of courses that includes principles, creative aspects, media selection and advertising research.
3. Course work that covers the economic, social and ethical issues of advertising.
4. Required courses in marketing.
5. Adequate library resources for references and research.
6. Opportunity for students to gain advertising experience while in school.

Of course, unit standards are also applicable to sequences like advertising. And, as in the case of unit evaluation, visit teams' reports of advertising sequences follow a specified format.

A. Scholarship and Teaching

1. Breadth and depth of advertising curriculum, teaching effectiveness, vitality of faculty, adherence to curriculum objectives.
2. Emphasis on social responsibility of advertising, emphasis on understanding of social and economic functions of advertising, evidence of student understanding of trends in advertising, ethics.

3. Quality of creative courses, media-markets instruction, management-problems-campaigns instruction, introductory (principles) course, graphic arts, use of media (campus and/or professional) in teaching.

4. Internships (if any) for credit: academic quality, student production, supervision, evaluation, and grading.

B. Equipment

1. Amount and use of equipment available for teaching, integration of journalism advertising courses with related courses in school of business.

C. Professional Relationships

1. Professional services to media, agencies and industry; opportunity for student contact with advertising professionals, evidence of effective faculty relationships with professional advertising people and organizations.

2. Additional

OPTIONS FOR ACTION

In light of current procedures and standards, the AEJ Advertising Division could pursue different courses of action regarding accreditation of advertising programs.

1. The division could petition the Accrediting Council to change its minimum guidelines and accreditation report form. For example, current guidelines could be revised, guidelines could be added, or some guidelines could be deleted. The guidelines could be kept at their present level of deliberate abstraction or they could be made more precise. The Council is open to suggestions about its guidelines and standards, but it may resist efforts to make the standards more precise--because of the philosophy that units and sequences should be evaluated in terms of their own objectives. Indeed, members of

the Advertising Division may not wish to make the guidelines more specific.

2. The division could establish a set of suggestions--as distinct from accreditation standards of guidelines--for advertising programs. These suggestions could be stated as desirable characteristics useful to units seeking to establish or upgrade their advertising programs.
3. Regardless of what the division does, it is essential to discuss standards, guidelines or suggestions with the American Academy of Advertising and relevant professional organizations.

The division's discussion of these topics can begin by considering the following questions.

1. What journalism and communications courses should be required for advertising students? Newswriting? Editing? Communication law? History?
2. What courses should be required outside journalism or communications? Psychology? Sociology? Statistics? Computer science? Mathematics? Literature? Art? Music?
3. What courses should be required or preferred from a school of business? Principles of marketing? Other marketing courses? Other business courses? Accounting?
4. What advertising courses should be required? Principles? Copywriting or creative strategy? Media? Campaigns? Research? Consumer behavior? Which of these courses--or others--should be available and optional?
5. What books, periodicals and reference materials are minimal requirements? Which are options?
6. Should students be required to have a specialization outside of journalism and advertising? What should it be?

REFERENCES

1. Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communications, "Accredited Journalism and Mass Communications Education, 1981-82," available from Milton Gross, ACEJMC Secretary-Treasurer, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65205. (This booklet describes accreditation procedures, explains standards, lists accredited units and sequences and lists membership on the Accrediting Committee and Accrediting Council.)

2. Journalism Educator, annual directory issues.

3. Donald Vance, "Perspective on Advertising Education: Business versus Communication Preparation," an unpublished paper presented to the national convention of the American Advertising Federation, Dallas, June 1980.

4. Donald Vance, "Accreditation in Advertising Education: Will Practitioner Organizations Join the Term?" Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Advertising, 1981.